



# CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

8 DECEMBER 2020

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## (U) CALIFORNIA

### (U) Dublin – Bay Area Man Sentenced to 15-Years for Trafficking Guns and Methamphetamine

(U) A judge sentenced a man to a 15-year federal sentence for admitting to selling methamphetamine and guns. Ismael “Playboy” Garcia, 35, was sentenced by Judge Richard Seaborg of the US District Court on Monday afternoon. In court filings, prosecutors wrote Garcia “orchestrated the sale of five illegal firearms, including one machine gun, and three-pounds of methamphetamine, all while on post-release community supervision (PRCS) pursuant to 2014 Santa Clara County convictions for gun possession and drug trafficking.” He was charged with federal offenses along with three other people and pleaded guilty to drug trafficking, and gun sales charges.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [Mercury News](#)

### (U) Castro Valley – Suspected Chinese Spy Targeted Local and National Politicians

(U) A suspected Chinese intelligence operative developed extensive ties with local and national politicians, including a US congressman; in what US officials believe was a political intelligence operation run by China’s main civilian spy agency between 2011 and 2015. The woman at the center of the operation, a Chinese national named Fang Fang or Christine Fang, targeted up-and-coming local politicians in the Bay Area and across the country who had the potential to make it big on the national stage. Through campaign fundraising, extensive networking, personal charisma, and romantic relationships with at least two Midwestern mayors, Fang was able to gain proximity to political power, according to current and former US intelligence officials, and one former elected official.

SOURCE: 8 December 2020, [Axios](#)

## (U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

### (U) Texas – CBP Officers Seize Over \$900K in Narcotics at the Laredo Port of Entry

(U) Laredo – US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) seized narcotics valued at over \$900,000 in two separate, unrelated enforcement actions at both the World Trade and Juarez Lincoln Bridges. The first narcotics interception occurred at the World Trade Bridge cargo facility when officers encountered an express consignment truck with a manifested shipment of a marble lamp. This incident resulted in the discovery of six packages containing 5.25-pounds of alleged methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$104,939. The second narcotics seizure occurred when CBP officers assigned to the Juarez Lincoln Bridge encountered a bus, resulting in the discovery of 42 packages totaling 103.57-pounds of alleged cocaine hidden within an overhead compartment. The narcotics have an estimated street value of \$798,660.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [CBP](#)

## (U) NATIONAL

### (U) District of Columbia – NSA Warns Hackers Exploiting Flaw in VMware Inc. Products

(U) Washington DC – The National Security Agency (NSA) warned that Russia's hackers are exploiting a flaw in products made by the software company VMware Inc. The NSA said in an advisory that Russia was using the flaw to “access protected data” and urged administrators of national security and defense

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systems, as well as defense contractors, to patch their networks and take other measures to reduce the risk of attack. The company encouraged “all customers to apply the latest product updates, security patches and mitigations made available for their specific environment.”

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [Bloomberg](#)

### **(U) Florida – Nearly 200 Arrests Made, 1,300 Guns Confiscated in Gang Violence Crack Down**

(U) Orlando – Officials said the Orange County gang unit has made nearly 200 arrests since it created a task force working with the FBI, Orlando Police, and the state attorney. The task force is working to reduce the violence sparked by a gang feud playing out over social media and through rap videos, according to Orlando police and the Orange County Sheriff’s office. In addition to the arrests, the county gang unit alone has confiscated more than 1,300 guns. Mina said despite the gang activity this year, overall crime is down 16%.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [WFTV](#)

### **(U) Florida – FDLE Agents Raid COVID-19 Data Scientist’s Home, Confiscate Hardware**

(U) Tallahassee – Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) agents on Monday raided the home of a top data scientist who helped build the state’s COVID dashboard and alleges she was fired from her government job because she refused to manipulate data. The Tallahassee home of Rebekah Jones was raided by agents executing a search warrant on suspicion that Jones hacked into a state Department of Health communications system, said Rick Swearingen, commissioner of the FDLE. Swearingen said agents “seized several devices that will be forensically analyzed.” Jones, in a Twitter post, said her phone “and all my hardware and tech” were confiscated.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [Reuters](#)

### **(U) Missouri – City Suffers Ransomware Attack, Some Service Disruptions Reported**

(U) Independence – The City of Independence is working to restore some systems after a ransomware attack on city technology. The city has not said how much of the system was breached, or what information that breach may have included. Multiple users reported issues accessing city utility billing services and service websites Monday. “Upon discovering the event, we began aggressively working with forensic specialists to confirm the nature and scope of this incident and implement a mitigation and response plan,” a city official said in a statement Monday. The statement also said that temporary system disruptions are possible as the city works to restore impacted systems from available backups.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [KMBC](#)

### **(U) New York – NYC Man Charged with Harboring Fugitive that Led to US Marshals' Shooting**

(U) New York City – A Bronx man is facing charges for harboring a fugitive and making false statements in connection with a shooting that took place last week that left two US Marshals injured and the suspect dead, federal prosecutors announced Monday. Grant Grandison, 35, was charged with one count of making false statements to federal agents and one count of harboring and concealing a person from arrest after allegedly allowing Andre Sterling, a fugitive wanted for the 20 November shooting of a state trooper in Massachusetts, to reside in his Bronx apartment.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [NBC New York](#)

### **(U) Texas – City Hall Building Closed Following Ransomware Attack**

(U) Snyder – Due to a ransomware attack, the City of Snyder City Hall building will remain closed until further notice, media reported on Monday. City officials said they would not be accepting payments as they work to get the problem resolved with an outside agency. This is the second ransomware attack in Snyder this year.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [KAMC](#)

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**(U) INTERNATIONAL**

**(U) India – Hundreds Ill, One Dead Due to Unidentified Illness in India**

(U) Eluru – At least one person has died, and 200 others have been hospitalized due to an unidentified illness in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. The illness was detected Saturday evening in Eluru. Since then, patients have experienced symptoms ranging from nausea and anxiety to loss of consciousness, doctors said. Officials are trying to determine the cause of the illness. So far, water samples from impacted areas haven't shown any signs of contamination, and the chief minister's office said people not linked to the municipal water supply have also fallen ill. Patients are of different ages and have tested negative for COVID-19 and other viral diseases such as dengue, chikungunya, or herpes. SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [AP](#)

**(U) New Zealand – Study Finds Christchurch Shooter Radicalized by Extreme Right-Wing Content**

(U) Christchurch – Brenton Tarrant, 29, who killed 51 people during Friday prayers at two mosques in Christchurch in 2019 was radicalized by YouTube, according to a report from The New Zealand Royal Commission published on Tuesday. The authors of the report state that they have “no doubt” the shooter subscribed to right-wing channels on YouTube, and viewed content promoting extreme right-wing and ethno-nationalist views on sites like 4chan and 8chan. The 792-page report also found that the white supremacist frequented an extremist Facebook group called “The Lads Society” where he complained about Muslim immigration and made violent threats towards local immigrants. The report found a series of failures ahead of the attack, but it concluded the tragedy was ultimately unpreventable.

SOURCE: 8 December 2020, [CNBC](#)

**(U) United Kingdom – Manchester Arena Bomber's Brother Admits Involvement**

(U) Manchester – The brother of the Manchester Arena bomber has admitted his involvement in planning the attack for the first time. Hashem Abedi, 23, was jailed for murdering the 22 people who were killed in the bombing at the end of an Ariana Grande concert in May 2017. During his trial, he denied helping his brother Salman, 22, plan the attack that also left hundreds more injured. But a public inquiry into the bombing heard that Hashem Abedi had made the admission in prison in October. During an interview with inquiry lawyers, he admitted he had “played a full part and a knowing part in the planning and preparation for the arena attack,” in which his brother also died, the inquiry heard.

SOURCE: 7 December 2020, [BBC](#)

**(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.**

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